

MEN'S VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS

What is the price of men's violence?

Seminar at the Riksdag
22 November 2007, 13.00-15.00
in the "Mittpoolen" seminar room (RÖ 2-08)

Programme

- 13.00 **Carina Hägg** (SocDem), responsible for the Council of Europe campaign against violence against women, introduces the seminar and **UNIFEM Sweden** presents its White Ribbon campaign
- 13.05 **Susanna Alakoski**, author of the novel *Svinalängorna* and editor of the anthology *Lyckliga slut: sjutton berättelser om vardagsvåld* ("*Happy endings: seventeen stories about everyday violence*")
- 13.25 (approx.) **Elis Envall**, analyst at the National Board of Health and Welfare, Unit for Individual and Family Care
Report: *Kostnader för våld mot kvinnor – En samhällsekonomisk analys*
("*Costs of violence against women – A socioeconomic analysis*")
- 13.45 (approx.) **Katarina Weinehall**, PhD and Senior Lecturer at the Department of Education, Umeå University and researcher specialising in research relating to victims of crime at the Department of Law, Umeå University
Case study: *Räkna med kostnader - en fallstudie om mäns våld mot kvinnor*
("*Expect it to cost – a case study on men's violence against women*") (2006)
- 14.05 (approx.) Coffee break and question session
- 14.30 (approx.) **Kent Olsson** (Mod), Deputy Chair of the Nordic Council's

Swedish delegation and representative in the Council of Europe Equality Committee and the Riksdag Men's Network against Trafficking in Human Beings for Sexual Abuse.

14.40 (approx.) **Jens Orback**, former Minister for Gender Equality, author of *Medan segern firades: min mammas historia* (“While victory was celebrated – my mother’s story”)

15.00 End of the seminar

Susanna Alakoski is the author of the book *Svinalängorna* (Bonniers), which won the August Prize in 2006. The novel depicts how a child experiences alcoholism, violence and poverty. The young girl Leena develops her own strategies to deal with all the misery of her upbringing and to protect her mother from her violent father. Susanna Alakoski is also the editor of the anthologies *Tala om klass* (“Talking of class”) and *Lyckliga slut* (“Happy Endings”) (Ordfront). The latter deals with the subject of violence against women and contains seventeen stories about everyday violence.

Elis Envall is an analyst at the Unit for Individual and Family Care at the National Board of Health and Welfare and has been involved in drawing up the report *Kostnader för våld mot kvinnor – En samhällsekonomisk analys* (“Costs for violence against women – A socioeconomic analysis”). The objective of the report published by the National Board of Health and Welfare in 2006 was to work out the cost borne by society of violence against women in close relationships and to increase knowledge and awareness of the occurrence and extent of violence. A number of development needs were identified in order to improve the preconditions, for example, for follow-up and evaluation of various measures.

Kent Olsson is a member of the Riksdag from the Moderate Party and Deputy Chair of the Swedish Delegation to the Nordic Council and deputy member of the Swedish Delegation to the Council of Europe. Kent Olsson is also a member of the Council of Europe Equality Committee and the Riksdag Men's Network against Trafficking in Human Beings for Sexual Abuse. The Network began as an initiative to encourage men to discuss gender-related violence. The Network consists of male Riksdag members from seven different parties, who are working actively to encourage men to become involved in the debate.

Jens Orback is the former Minister for Gender Equality and author of the book *Medan segern firades: min mammas historia* (“While victory was celebrated – my mother’s story”) (*Natur & Kultur*). In the book he includes an account of the violence women were subjected to during the end of the Second World War. At the centre of the story is his own mother, Katja Orback, who was 18 when the war ended, but chose to wait another fifty years before telling her story. The book is a description not only of how guilt and shame can silence a person and a family, but also of the need to know the truth, however dark and hard it may be. *The power of will can be used to hide things but not to forget...*

Katarina Weinehall has a PhD and is Senior Lecturer at the Department of Education, Umeå University. She now has a research position at the Department of Law specialising in research

relating to victims of crime. She is one of the joint authors of *Räkna med kostnader - en fallstudie om mäns våld mot kvinnor* ("Expect it to cost – a case study of men's violence against women") from 2006. In the study, Katarina Weinehall, together with others, described how four women were subjected to violence by the same man and then in a case study calculated the costs of the violence that one of these women was subjected to. Her calculations are based on interviews, diaries, letters, medical journals and investigations carried out by authorities. Because these calculations cover an extensive period of time, the investigation distinguishes itself methodologically from many other similar studies that attempt to calculate costs.

Costs of men's violence against women in Sweden

Violence against women in close relationships is an extensive and serious social problem that has aroused ever increasing interest and commitment during the last few years. However, focus has rarely been directed on identifying the socioeconomic costs. What does men's violence towards women actually cost society as a whole and each individual woman and her family members? In the autumn of 2006, the Council of Europe initiated a multinational campaign to combat violence against women in close relationships in which the importance of socioeconomic analyses was established. In many parts of the world, particularly in Europe, cost estimates have recently been carried out in order to estimate the economic effects of violence against women in close relationships. In Sweden, for example, the National Board of Health and Welfare published the report *Kostnader för våld mot kvinnor – En samhälls-ekonomisk analys* ("Costs for violence against women – A socioeconomic analysis"). The report states that violence against women involves severe economic strain for a number of social bodies. Despite the fact that it is difficult to ascertain an exact cost, the studies enable us to understand the extent of the problem to society.

In Sweden almost 23,000 cases of maltreatment of women are reported to the police annually. In addition to this over 2,000 cases of gross violation of women's integrity, almost 18,000 cases of unlawful threats against women and over 15,000 cases of harassment of women are reported. Very many cases go unreported. Children also suffer to a great extent from the violence, either through witnessing violence or being subjected to it themselves. Around 10 percent of all children have on at least one occasion experienced this type of violence and 5 percent experience it often.

In its report from 2006, the National Board of Health and Welfare estimated that the cost of men's violence against women amounts to SEK 2.7 – 3.3 billion per year in Sweden. This corresponds to SEK 35,900 – 44,000 per woman and year or approx. SEK 300 - 370 per citizen and year.

These costs were calculated on the basis of statistics from the National Council for Crime Prevention (BRÅ) and Statistics Sweden (SCB). The National Board of Health and Welfare have in their calculations estimated that 75,000 women every year are affected by violence in close relationships, 16 women are killed and one woman over and above these commits suicide as a result of having been exposed to violence. In addition to this, it is presumed that four men commit suicide every year in connection with the fact that they have killed their partner or former partner.

The direct costs of this are estimated to be SEK 1,978 – 2,536, which include hospital treatment, legal costs, social services, women's shelters and support groups for crime victims and corresponding costs in the public sector, as well as support for treatment of violent men. In addition, there are costs for processing these cases incurred by central authorities and the social insurance office.

Indirect costs are estimated in the report to be MSEK 717 – 764 per year. To this we must add the value of the loss in production and voluntary work. In addition to this, the costs of transfers have been estimated to be MSEK 690, of which sickness benefit amounts to MSEK 347. Transfers for economic assistance have been estimated to be MSEK 378 and for criminal injury compensation MSEK 10.

The costs that have not been included in the study are for dental care, medicines, injury, and pain and suffering, etc. of the children affected by violence. An extensive item which has not been included in the calculations either is the cost of psychiatric care. The results of a British study indicate that these costs are extremely extensive and if the amounts in this study were to be translated to Swedish conditions, it is estimated in the report of the National Board of Health and Welfare that the sum total of the costs presented in the report would increase tenfold.

Other studies of national costs of men's violence against women also indicate considerably higher figures. The reason why the figures differ is that different expenses are included in the studies. Certain factors are also very difficult to calculate in terms of economic cost, such as mental suffering.

Calculating costs for men's violence against women is not only about establishing figures, but about providing a holistic view of the problem. Calculations highlight which individual sectors of society are affected. A socioeconomic analysis of the costs of violence in close relationships also provides a useful basis for further investigation of other effects that these problems may give rise to.